

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS Canberra

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UNEMPLOYMENT, DECEMBER 1978 PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES

INQUIRIES

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MAIN FEATURES

Note: Survey estimates are subject to sampling variability, as explained in paragraphs 8 to 10 below. Standard errors of estimates and of movements are shown in the tables.

- . In December 1978 the estimated number of unemployed persons looking for full-time work was 374,100 (6.8 per cent of the full-time labour force), comprising 220,500 males and 153,600 females.
- . Of these —
 - 158,800 were aged 15-19 years (an increase of 60,900 since November), of whom 88,000 were looking for their first job.
 - 215,300 were aged 20 years and over (an increase of 4,400).
- . 67,200 unemployed persons were looking for part-time work (6.6 per cent of the part-time labour force).

SPECIAL NOTE

Because survey operations were affected by the Christmas and New Year holidays, publication of the estimates for January 1979 will be delayed. It is expected that the estimates will be published on 16 February.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

This bulletin contains preliminary unemployment estimates derived from the monthly population survey. Until February 1978, surveys were conducted in February, May, August and November each year. More detailed estimates are published in *The Labour Force (Preliminary)* (6202.0) and *The Labour Force* (6203.0).

The population survey

2. The survey is based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings (about 30,000 houses, flats, etc.)

and non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, etc.), and covers about two-thirds of one per cent of the population of Australia. The information is obtained from the occupants of selected dwellings by carefully chosen and specially trained interviewers, the interviews generally being conducted during the two weeks beginning on the Monday between the 6th and 12th of each month. The information obtained relates to the week before the interview (i.e. the survey week). Because of operational problems arising from the Christmas and New Year holidays, the December 1978 survey commenced a week earlier than usual (i.e. on 4 December), but most interviews were conducted during the following week.

Definitions

3. For purposes of the survey, *unemployed persons* are those aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the survey week and :

- (a) had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the survey week and :
 - (i) were available for work in the survey week, or would have been available except for temporary illness (i.e. lasting for less than four weeks to the end of the survey week); or
 - (ii) were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the survey week and would have started in the survey week if the job had been available then;

or (b) were waiting to be called back to a full-time or part-time job from which they had been stood down without pay for less than four weeks up to the end of the survey week (including the whole of the survey week) for reasons other than bad weather or plant breakdown.

This definition of unemployed persons conforms closely to that recommended by the Eighth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (1954).

4. *Unemployed persons looking for first job* are those who had never worked for two weeks or more in a full-time job.

5. The *unemployment rate* for any group is the

number unemployed expressed as a percentage of the labour force (i.e. employed plus unemployed) in the same group.

Revision of series

6. Estimates back to August 1971 have been revised to a basis comparable with that of the estimates in this bulletin. They are published in the August 1978 issue of *The Labour Force* (6203.0).

Comparability of series

7. When comparing unemployment estimates for February 1978 and subsequent months with those for earlier periods it should be noted that with the introduction of monthly surveys the interviews are now conducted during a two-week period, whereas formerly the period was four weeks. This change of timing may affect the level of the figures for any month, but particularly for months during which unemployment may be changing rapidly.

Reliability of the estimates

8. Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings they, and the movements derived from them, are subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the *standard error*, which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of dwellings was included in the survey. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included in the survey, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

9. Detailed information on standard errors of the estimates and of movements in the estimates are published in current issues of *The Labour Force* (6203.0).

10. Standard errors of unemployment estimates for the latest month and of estimates of movements since the previous month are contained in the tables. Examples of the use of these two sets of standard errors are given below.

- (a) The estimate of 374,100 unemployed persons looking for full-time work in December 1978 has a standard error of about 6,500 and therefore there are about two chances in three that the value that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey will fall within the range 367,600 to 380,600 and about nineteen chances in twenty that the value will fall within the range 361,100 to 387,100.
- (b) The estimate of movement in the number of unemployed persons looking for full-time work from November to December 1978 is an increase of 65,300. The standard error of this estimate of movement is about 5,200 and therefore there are about two chances in three that if all dwellings had been included in the survey the estimate of movement would have been within the range +60,100 to +70,500 and

about nineteen chances in twenty that it would have been within the range +54,900 to +75,700.

Seasonally adjusted estimates

11. The move to the higher level of unemployment since 1974 appears to have been accompanied by shifts in the pattern of seasonal variation. For this reason the publication of seasonally adjusted quarterly figures of unemployment has been suspended. The matter will be kept under review. Calculation of seasonally adjusted monthly figures will not be possible until results for two or three years are available.

Comparability with Commonwealth Employment Service figures

12. The survey estimates of unemployed persons looking for full-time work may differ from the number of persons registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) as not employed, awaiting placement in full-time employment, for a number of reasons, including the following:

- (a) the survey estimates include some unemployed persons (particularly females) who did not register with the CES
- (b) they exclude persons who worked for one hour or more during the survey week, although they may have been registered with the CES — for example because they became unemployed during the week or worked for only short periods
- (c) they exclude persons registered as unemployed who found jobs or who were no longer looking for work but did not notify the CES of their changed situation
- (d) they represent averages over a period (see paragraph 2), whereas the CES figures refer to numbers registered on the Friday nearest the end of the month. This is particularly important at times when there are substantial rises or falls in unemployment or in registrations with the CES
- (e) they are subject to sampling variability. (See paragraphs 8 to 10).

Related publications

13. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications which are available on request:

The Labour Force (Preliminary) (6202.0)
The Labour Force (6203.0)
Information Paper : Questionnaires used in the Labour Force Survey (6232.0).

All publications produced by the ABS are listed in *Catalogue of Publications* (1101.0) which is available free of charge from any ABS office.

Symbols and other usages

- .. Not applicable
- * Subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses. See paragraphs 8 to 10 for details.

Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

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 Australian Statistician

TABLE 1. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS (a)

Month	Number ('000)										
	Looking for full-time work						Unemployment rate (per cent)				
	Aged 15-19 years			Looking for part-time work	Total	Looking for full-time work			Looking for part-time work	Total	
	Looking for first job	Total	Aged 20 years and over			Total	Aged 15-19 years	Aged 20 years and over			Total
MALES											
1977 -											
November	16.2	48.1	117.0	165.1	18.0	183.1	15.7	3.3	4.3	7.4	4.5
1978 -											
February	40.2	74.6	160.8	235.4	19.5	255.0	20.0	4.6	6.0	9.4	6.2
September	19.9	53.7	151.0	204.7	13.4	218.1	16.1	4.3	5.3	6.4	5.4
October	19.1	50.7	143.3	194.0	13.9	207.9	15.5	4.1	5.0	6.4	5.1
November	18.0	47.8	143.2	191.0	15.4	206.4	14.7	4.1	5.0	7.2	5.1
December	40.9	75.1	145.3	220.5	21.7	242.1	20.0	4.1	5.7	9.8	5.9
Standard error of -											
December estimates	2.7	3.5	4.5	5.3	2.0	5.5	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.1
November to December movement	2.5	3.1	3.9	4.4	2.0	4.6	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.1
FEMALES											
1977 -											
November	16.8	51.9	60.4	112.4	51.4	163.7	19.2	4.9	7.5	6.5	7.1
1978 -											
February	40.5	72.4	87.9	160.3	61.8	222.1	23.5	7.1	10.4	8.2	9.7
September	19.3	49.1	71.1	120.1	46.3	166.4	17.9	5.6	7.8	6.0	7.2
October	17.4	45.2	66.8	111.9	47.7	159.6	17.2	5.3	7.3	6.1	6.9
November	20.3	50.1	67.8	117.9	45.5	163.3	18.8	5.4	7.7	5.7	7.1
December	47.1	83.7	69.9	153.6	45.5	199.1	25.9	5.6	9.7	5.7	8.4
Standard error of -											
December estimates	2.9	3.6	3.4	4.6	2.8	5.1	1.1	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.2
November to December movement	2.7	3.2	3.1	4.0	2.6	4.3	1.0	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2
PERSONS											
1977 -											
November	33.0	100.0	177.4	277.4	69.4	346.8	17.4	3.8	5.2	6.7	5.5
1978 -											
February	80.6	147.0	248.8	395.8	81.3	477.0	21.6	5.2	7.3	8.5	7.4
September	39.2	102.8	222.1	324.8	59.7	384.5	16.9	4.6	6.0	6.1	6.0
October	36.5	95.9	210.0	305.9	61.6	367.5	16.2	4.4	5.7	6.1	5.8
November	38.3	97.9	210.9	308.8	60.9	369.7	16.5	4.4	5.8	6.0	5.8
December	88.0	158.8	215.3	374.1	67.2	441.3	22.7	4.5	6.8	6.6	6.8
Standard error of -											
December estimates	3.7	4.7	5.3	6.5	3.3	6.9	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1
November to December movement	3.3	4.0	4.4	5.2	3.0	5.5	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1

(a) For definitions see page 1. See paragraph 7 for details of change in timing of the survey from February 1978. Estimates for the latest month are preliminary, subject to revision. For information on standard errors see paragraphs 8 to 10.

TABLE 2. UNEMPLOYED PERSONS (a), STATES AND TERRITORIES

State or Territory	Number ('000)					Unemployment rate (per cent)				
	Looking for full-time work					Looking for full-time work				
	Aged 15-19 years	Aged 20 years and over	Total	Looking for part-time work	Total	Aged 15-19 years	Aged 20 years and over	Total	Looking for part-time work	Total
New South Wales –										
1978 – November	35.8	72.3	108.1	22.4	130.5	18.4	4.3	5.8	6.6	5.9
December	48.4	70.2	118.6	22.2	140.8	21.8	4.2	6.2	6.5	6.3
Standard error of –										
December estimates	2.9	3.4	4.1	2.1	4.4	1.3	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
November to December movement	2.5	2.8	3.3	1.9	3.5	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
Victoria –										
1978 – November	21.0	47.4	68.5	14.3	82.7	14.7	3.6	4.7	5.4	4.8
December	41.4	52.3	93.7	20.1	113.7	23.7	4.0	6.3	7.4	6.5
Standard error of –										
December estimates	2.5	2.8	3.4	1.9	3.6	1.4	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.2
November to December movement	2.2	2.3	2.7	1.7	2.9	1.3	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
Queensland –										
1978 – November	13.2	35.5	48.7	8.8	57.4	12.5	5.1	6.1	6.1	6.1
December	25.1	37.6	62.7	9.2	71.8	19.8	5.4	7.6	6.4	7.4
Standard error of –										
December estimates	1.7	2.0	2.4	1.1	2.5	1.3	0.3	0.3	0.8	0.3
November to December movement	1.4	1.6	1.8	1.0	1.9	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.2
South Australia –										
1978 – November	13.4	25.4	38.8	5.4	44.2	21.4	5.9	7.8	5.3	7.4
December	18.0	24.1	42.1	4.6	46.6	25.1	5.6	8.4	4.4	7.7
Standard error of –										
December estimates	1.1	1.3	1.5	0.7	1.6	1.5	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.3
November to December movement	0.9	1.0	1.2	0.6	1.2	1.3	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
Western Australia –										
1978 – November	8.6	20.8	29.4	5.6	34.9	15.6	5.1	6.4	5.8	6.3
December	15.8	19.6	35.4	6.7	42.2	23.7	4.8	7.5	7.0	7.4
Standard error of –										
December estimates	1.1	1.2	1.5	0.8	1.6	1.6	0.3	0.3	0.8	0.3
November to December movement	0.9	1.0	1.1	0.7	1.2	1.4	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.2
Tasmania –										
1978 – November	3.9	5.3	9.2	*	10.5	17.9	4.1	6.2	*	5.9
December	5.9	5.4	11.4	1.6	13.0	23.2	4.2	7.4	5.6	7.2
Standard error of –										
December estimates	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.7	2.0	0.4	0.5	1.1	0.4
November to December movement	0.4	0.4	0.5	..	0.5	1.6	0.3	0.3	..	0.3
Northern Territory –										
1978 – November	*	*	2.7	*	3.0	*	*	6.1	*	5.5
December	*	*	2.8	*	2.9	*	*	6.3	*	5.3
Standard error of –										
December estimates	..	..	0.5	..	0.5	..	..	1.1	..	0.9
November to December movement	..	..	0.4	..	0.5	..	..	0.9	..	0.9
Australian Capital Territory –										
1978 – November	*	2.6	3.7	2.7	6.4	*	3.3	4.3	15.0	6.2
December	(b)3.3	(b)4.2	(b)7.5	2.8	(b)10.3	(b)38.5	(b)5.1	(b)8.3	15.4	(b)9.5
Standard error of –										
December estimates	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.8	5.8	0.7	0.8	2.7	0.7
November to December movement	..	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.6	..	0.6	0.6	2.2	0.6

(a) See note (a) to Table 1. (b) This estimate could be high; as pointed out in paragraph 8 there is one chance in twenty that it could be more than two standard errors above the figure which would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included in the survey.